

dangerous work they perform to provide one of the sources of fuel needed to operate the country's industries and to provide energy to homes and businesses.

There were 12 miners, Thomas Anderson, Alva Martin Bennett, Jim Bennett, Jerry Groves, George Hammer, Jr., Terry Helms, David Lewis, Martin Toler, Fred Ware, Jr., Jack Weaver, Jesse Jones, and Marshall Winans, that lost their lives on January 3, 2006, but fortunately one miner was rescued, Randal McCloy. I also recognize the 2 miners that lost their lives early this year in a fire in Aracoma Alma Mine on January 19, 2006. These men were Don Israel Bragg and Ellery "Elvis" Hatfield.

It is a burden on all of our hearts when hard working citizens of this country perish, especially while on the job. My prayers go out to the friends and families of those who have lost their lives.

I support H. Con. Res. 331 and I urge my colleagues to follow suit. I thank you for your consideration and yield the remainder of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, last month, America witnessed the tragedy of the Sago and Aracoma Alma mine deaths. We saw terrible things happen to good people, and the Nation was saddened by the events that unfolded.

I join with my colleagues in honoring these hard-working Americans who died or were injured while laboring to support their families. We also recognize the individuals who worked so hard to save them.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the friends, family, and neighbors of each of the miners affected.

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 331, a resolution honoring the 16 extraordinary miners who lost their lives in the recent West Virginia coal mine accidents and recognizing the courage of Randal McCloy who survived. Further, I join my colleagues in extending our condolences to the families of these miners, and recognize the brave efforts of the rescue crews and volunteers during this time.

I represent southwestern and southern Illinois, a region with a rich coal mining history. Coal mining has played a significant role in transforming and developing the region since the mid-1800s when substantial coal mining in Illinois began. In 2006, the coal industry continues to be a vital component of our economy, and one we are working to strengthen for the future. Improving mine safety standards is an important part of this process in Illinois, West Virginia, and other coal producing States.

These unfortunate coal mining fatalities in West Virginia have highlighted the pressing need to revise the national coal mine health and safety standards to ensure miners are equipped with state of the art technologies and tracking devices, and sufficient emergency supplies of oxygen. I am pleased West Virginia legislators acted quickly to enact a state law requiring coal companies to give employees electronic tracking devices and to store oxygen supplies underground. Precautionary measures are needed to protect the health and safety of our coal miners and penalties for flagrant violations of the law and regulations must be enforced. To this end, I have joined my colleagues in the House as a cosponsor of H.R. 4695, the Federal Coal Mine Safety and Health Act of 2006.

Mr. Speaker, I know my colleagues join me in honoring the West Virginia coal miners for their courage and sacrifice and expressing our deepest condolences to their families.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BONNER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 331, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The title of the concurrent resolution was amended so as to read: "Concurrent resolution honoring the sacrifice and courage of the 16 coal miners killed in various mine disasters in West Virginia, and recognizing the rescue crews for their outstanding efforts in the aftermath of the tragedies."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages in writing from the President of the United States were communicated to the House by Mrs. Wanda Evans, one of his secretaries.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 40 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1712

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. REHBERG) at 5 o'clock and 12 minutes p.m.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 4297, TAX RELIEF EXTENSION RECONCILIATION ACT OF 2005

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 4297) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to section 201(b) of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2006, with a Senate amendment thereto, disagree to the Senate amendment, and request a conference with the Senate thereon.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT OFFERED BY MR. NEAL OF MASSACHUSETTS

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct conferees.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Neal of Massachusetts moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 4297 be instructed as follows:

(1) The House conferees shall agree to the provisions of section 106 of the Senate amendment (relating to extension and increase in minimum tax relief to individuals).

(2) The House conferees shall recede from the provisions of the House bill that extend the lower tax rate on dividends and capital gains that would otherwise terminate at the close of 2008.

(3) To the maximum extent possible within the scope of conference, the House conferees shall insist on a conference report that would not increase the Federal deficit for any year.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XXII, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL) and the gentlemen from California (Mr. THOMAS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL).

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, we all know that perhaps more important than anything else we do here, we set and we establish priorities. Our motion to instruct sets forth the priorities that I believe should be followed in the conference on this legislation.

The priorities of the Republican majority are clear: Large tax cuts that disproportionately benefit the wealthiest in our society, while slashing initiatives that protect the most vulnerable in our society. Even in normal times, these priorities would be wrong, but these are not normal times.

America is currently involved in two wars, one in Iraq and one in Afghanistan. These are the first wars in our country's history where only those in the military and the poor are being asked to sacrifice.

Hurricane Katrina forced America to see poverty and its consequences. And let me compliment former President Jimmy Carter for his remarks yesterday at Mrs. King's funeral when he spoke of that very issue.

□ 1715

The administration has converted surpluses into an enormous budget deficit, but has done nothing to prepare programs like Social Security and Medicare for the future other than to threaten privatization. The most significant fiscal turnaround in the history of America has occurred on the watch of the Republican majority here in the Congress.

What I think is interesting, and I say this with great confidence, during these past few years we have almost doubled defense spending, we are fighting two wars, we have created a Department of Homeland Security, we have witnessed the national principle